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Education in Peiping in Past

Year

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EDUCATION IN PEKING IN PAST YEAR

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In the past Peking was the center of reactionary regimes; its residents, including the intelligentsia, had long been exposed to the cultural environment and fabricated propaganda of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. ^Now, however, Peking has become the birthplace of a new culture; the broad masses and the revolutionary intelligentsia there possess a revolutionary tradition characterized by heroic struggles. Since the liberation and under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao, and following the lead of the workers and peasants, Peking's educational workers and intelligentsia have engaged in the struggle to wipe out the feudal remnant in schools and to build up a new cultural enterprise under the new people's democracy. Through the excellent coordination among various organizations many changes of great significance occurred in Peking's educational activities during the past year. These changes consist of the following three aspects:

First, the people's government has taken over and carried out preliminary reforms in the schools formerly controlled by the reactionary Kuomintang:

(1) The government has taken over the public primary and intermediate schools, reorganized or simplified their complex, bureaucratic administrative structure, the former faculty, discipline,

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general administration, and physical education divisions were combined into a faculty and discipline division, and a general administration division), created a democratic administrative system with chief responsibility being concentrated in the principal, adopted a public auditing system for the administration of school finances and wiped out the dictatorship and corruption inherited from the former regime.

(2) The government has created a new system whereby a chief teacher at each grade will be in charge of general instruction as well as school discipline, thus overcoming the lack of supervision and absence of order. The government also assisted the students in organizing study units, groups, and student assemblies through which they can develop a sound attitude in study.

(3) The government has abolished all the reactionary courses, such as civics and the boy scout training in intermediate schools, and local administration, local autonomous government, etc. in teachers colleges. On the other hand, courses in political theory are added to all schools, hours for the English language are reduced, and the Russian language is added to the curricula.

(4) Textbooks have been improved in content. For intermediate schools new textbooks (edited by the Department of Education of the North China People's Government) on political science, Chinese literature and history have replaced all the old ones except those on natural science. These new textbooks are continuously being revised or rewritten. Primary schools have adopted the new textbooks on all subjects compiled by the Department of Education of the North China People's Government. The Department of Education of

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the North China People's Government has also edited and published new supplementary textbooks on arithmetic, outlines of history for teachers, and notes to textbooks on Chinese literature.

(5) In order to devise new teaching methods to replace the old ones, which separated theory from reality, 58 primary schools sponsored teaching observation programs in which there were 85 demonstrators and 2,719 attending teachers. After mutual and self-criticism, teachers have succeeded in correcting the former teaching technique characterized by putting too much emphasis on technique instead of theoretical attitude, on subjective judgement instead of the objective viewpoints of the students, on lifeless preaching instead of inspiring instruction.

(6) The government subsidized private intermediate schools which made remarkable progress in school reform, but punished the reactionary intermediate schools such as the Chih-Cheng School, the intermediate school affiliated with the Central University, the Ta-Chung School, the Hual-Tung School, the Ta-Ch'ung School, and the ^{Ssu-tsun} ~~Sue Chuan~~ School, by taking over the school administration, merging them into other schools or dissolving them. To proceed with school reorganization, the Education Bureau of Peking promulgated the Provisional Regulations on Controlling Private Primary and Intermediate schools and the Provisional Regulations Governing the Organization of the Board of Trustees for Private Primary and Middle Schools."

Second, the government has conducted a political reindoc-trination program among the teachers. At the time the government took over the schools from the former regime, many schoolteachers

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and students were very suspicious of the Communist Party and the People's Government and misunderstood the relations between China and Soviet Union and the agrarian reform, for they had been long exposed to the Kuomintang's false and distorting propaganda. To purge such erroneous ideology and to create a revolutionary world view among the teachers and students, the government conducted a broad program of ideological reindoctrination.

By using political class meetings, summer camps, manual work, picture exhibits of Soviet achievements and other exhibits, the government has effected many changes in the ideology of the students: (1) Students in general have accepted the truth that "labor creates the world" and the theory of the class struggle. (2) They have achieved a fundamental understanding of some of the major issues in the Chinese Revolution, including agrarian reform. (3) They have begun to understand the Chinese Communist Party and to change their previous attitude of suspicion; they recognize generally who are the three enemies and who are the four friends. (4) With respect to foreign relations, a majority of them have been able to distinguish between enemy and friend and to understand that the Soviet Union is our friend.

Ideological reindoctrination among teachers was conducted mainly through self-study in a coordination with discussion, study of current problems, and rudimentary self-criticism. Thus, during the summer vacation and under the leadership of the Bureau of Education and the Teachers Alliance, 16 current affairs study meetings were organized. Study clubs were organized in schools to discuss the basic issues of the Chinese Revolution and current affairs.

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Also, during the summer vacation 5,800 teachers were organized into research groups, mainly for the study of historical materialism with emphasis on the creation of a philosophy of life on the basis of the proletariat attitude. At the end of the summer study session, teachers were divided into groups to study teaching methods in their respective fields of specialization, political ideology was also taught to the teachers during their professional studies.

Third, the broad working class has won a chance to obtain an education. In the past year the government established a great number of literacy classes for children and for adults, reorganized many cultural centers, libraries, and reading rooms. Many workers and peasants, including their dependents, went to schools. On 10 August the workers' evening schools enrolled 392 students in 174 classes (these evening schools will be placed under the leadership of the workers' union). Last December the adult evening schools opened 423 classes with a total of 15,000 students. To facilitate agrarian reform, 16,000 peasants in the Peking suburban area were enrolled in study classes, and 9 cultural centers, 7 newspaper reading rooms, and 2 libraries were set up; these establishments sponsored frequent group meetings, popular lecture meetings, exhibits, evening programs and helped the people organize singing teams, folk dances, drama groups, etc. According to December statistics, the 8 cultural centers and libraries in Peking City had 600,000 readers during the year, and a total of 110,000 people attended evening programs. The city has 658 literacy classes for children, enrolling 20,026 students; about 15,000 workers' children, formerly denied schooling, have now been admitted into regular schools.

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This is the picture of Peking's educational activities in the past year. What does it indicate? It shows that the people of Peking are developing the new people's democratic education with all their efforts. Indeed, there have been many achievements with respect to education in Peking. However, Peking's educational development is far from sufficient in quality or in quantity. Some schools have not been reorganized, or are reorganized without being able to function in a normal way. Teaching methods and the content of school curricula are far from being adequate. Education has not been so conducted as to have the desired significant effect on production. Relatively few working people can go to school. Thus, the educational policy for 1950 is to further strengthen political reindoctrination, reform the primary and intermediate schools, promote vocational schools and teachers' colleges, expand sparetime educational programs for workers and peasants, improve social education, devise a new plan to eliminate illiteracy completely, establish more short-term training classes, promote technical training, increase the cultural, political and scientific qualifications of the broad masses of the people in Peking, particularly the laboring class. We should educate the workers to develop production so that Peking will forge ahead as a productive city. We expect that all who are concerned with education in Peking will do their best to march forward in their achievements in 1950.

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